

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY MAGDALENE, WHIPSNAD



ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

OF

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2024

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Statements of Accounts and Independent Examiner's Report

The Trustees of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene Whipsnade present their report and financial statements for the year ending 31st December 2024.

INTRODUCTION

The Church of St. Mary Magdalene Whipsnade sits on The Green in Whipsnade. It is part of the Deanery of Dunstable and within that of the United Benefice of Kensworth, Studham and Whipsnade in the Church of England Diocese of St Albans. It is also a member of the North Chilterns Group of Parishes. The correspondence address is The Vicarage, Clayhall Road, Kensworth LU6 3RF. The PCC form a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2020) and a charity currently excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served at any time between 1st January and 31st December 2024 are:

Ex Officio members:

The Rector: The Reverend Canon Nicola Lenthall (Chairman)

Churchwardens:

Mrs Isobel Randall (to 17 April 2024)

Mrs Jane Wright (from 17 April 2024)

Mr Martin Rees

Deanery Synod representatives (elected)

Mrs Bola Fola-Caleb

Mrs Isobel Randall

Elected members:

Mrs Sarah Ayres

Mrs Joan Bailey (Secretary)

Mr Michael Bailey (Vice-Chairman, Safeguarding Officer)

Mr Christopher Hazell

Mrs Jo King

Mr Les Randall (Treasurer)

Mrs Pamela Ward

Mrs Jane Wright (to 17 April 2024)

OUR PURPOSE

The PCC are committed to a life of faith and worship and in their role as PCC members to making our Church a welcoming place of worship and communion that parishioners will want to visit and support. The Church makes a vital contribution to village life and to the spiritual and pastoral well-being of our village community. Our objectives are reviewed annually and fully expressed in our Mission Action Plan (MAP) which is regularly updated.

HOW OUR ACTIVITIES DELIVER PUBLIC BENEFIT

Through our mission and ministry the PCC provide:

- A focus for worship and prayer;
- Pastoral care for the people living in the Parish.

We work with the Rector, the Reverend Canon Nicola Lenthall, in ministering to the people of the Parish, both through spiritual and social action and through the use of the Church building and the Churchyard. Our principal object is the promotion of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the beliefs and practices of the Church of England. The PCC are also specifically responsible for the maintenance and development of the Church building and the Churchyard.

MISSION AND MINISTRY

The PCC are committed to caring for the people of the community in love and to encouraging as many as can to worship at our Church and become part of our worshipping life. The people of the Parish and those on the Electoral Roll are nurtured through worship and prayer. They knit together in love through their common understanding of the message of the Gospel and their desire to live out the Gospel in their daily lives, through social action and pastoral responsiveness.

Our Ministry team currently comprises Reverend Dave Heather our Benefice Curate and our Readers Dorothy Blackburn and Penny Fray. The Benefice team have led services and supported the Rector and the community at Whipsnade to maintain high standards of support and ministry for the congregation and our community. We are particularly grateful to Reverend Dave Heather and Penny Fray for their frequent leading of our services.

Our mission and ministry include support and social engagement in the wider community for example regular village lunches, 2-weekly coffee Wednesday morning coffee mornings, our monthly 'Knit and Natter' group and Sunday School each second Sunday of the month. We join in and contribute to wider village life in Whipsnade.

Ministry of Worship

The Rector and PCC continue to work together with the other Churches in the Benefice of Kensworth, Studham and Whipsnade to offer a range of services on a Sunday morning. Provision for High and Holy days is made throughout the Benefice. It is our policy to meet the expectations of worshippers by keeping to the same time every Sunday morning, with the exception of the services held on the fifth Sunday of a month. These are held in rotation around the three Churches of the Benefice at the usual time of their morning service. Traditional and modern language forms of Eucharist are both used at Whipsnade, and on the 3rd Sunday of the month we have a Family Service which is a simple non-eucharistic service designed to appeal to families or to people who are not confirmed but wish to take a full part in worship. Those who come to a service for the first time often talk about how welcome they are made to feel. Special occasions are celebrated by services such as Evensong on our Patronal Festival, Christingle, and the making by children of Easter gardens on Good Friday for the Churches of the Benefice. We also take our turn to host services for the North Chilterns Group of parishes.

We were very pleased that people chose during the year to use the Church for the occasional offices of baptism, marriage and funerals. During 2024 there was one wedding, one funeral with cremation following, one memorial and thanksgiving service with interment of cremated remains, one funeral at a crematorium and six interments of cremated remains.

Those who attend our services, whether regularly or for the occasional offices, typically express gratitude to the Rector and members of the congregation for their dedication, support and kindness. People are very pleased that we now have our second Garden of Remembrance for the interment of cremated remains which is well maintained by Jane and Ben Wright and adds much to the beauty of the Churchyard on the approach to the Church.

The guest speaker at the annual Tree Cathedral Service on 9 June was the Revd. Ricky Truner from St. Augustine's Church in the Dunstable Team. The service was again supported by the Dunstable Salvation Army Band, and by the children of Studham and Kensworth Schools, who sang together and led the prayers.

Mission for children and young people

We have strong links with the catchment school, Studham Village CE Academy which is part of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust. The Rector and the Chairman of the Parish Council are governors of the School and Mike Bailey is a Member of the Company. The Rector has continued to offer collective worship to the children, and pastoral support to the staff and governors. She is much valued by the whole school community.

The congregation are pleased to have been able once again to make our work with children a key element of mission and pastoral work at Whipsnade. It is clear that the children enjoy coming to Sunday School and

working with Glenda Cox, learning through their exciting activities and sharing them with the adult congregation at the end of the service.

A Benefice-wide youth group established before the Covid pandemic for 11-15 year olds has been running again since 2022, and is open to Whipsnade children in this age group. In June 2024 three young people from this group were confirmed.

Our Wider Ministry

We work closely with our sister Churches in the Benefice and the three congregations collaborate well to provide spiritual and social support for the local population, in addition to our regular services.

We also work with local groups of churches through the Deanery Synod, the North Chilterns Group of Churches (NCG) and local Methodists in a number of ways.

Deanery Synod

One member of the PCC sits on the Deanery Synod, which at the beginning of 2024 was chaired by Revd Canon Nicola as Rural Dean, and since has been chaired by her successor Revd Noel McGeeney from the Ouzel Valley team ministry. Their representation and commitment continue to provide us with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the Church. The Synod met three times in 2024. In March, the Synod was hosted by Studham for the first time in a long while (and we are grateful to Felicity Cornelius and Gill Harris for their facilitation and to Geoff and Di Shute for helping with the refreshments). The speaker at this meeting was Canon Peter Adams, who talked about the synodical system of government of the Church of England, and how important it is that all parishioners should feel that they can have their voices heard – which can be done through the representation made by each and every parish at Deanery Synod, and through this at Diocesan and General Synod as well. People were urged to think about standing for Diocesan Synod, the elections for which fell in the summer. In July Synod met at All Saints Chalgrave, where the incumbent, the Revd. Linda Washington, was able to show members the recently completed roof renovation. The meeting was chaired by Kerry Smith, as acting lay co-chair, as the new Rural dean unable to be present. The presentation was given by Judith James, West Cluster Leader and Prayer Circle Friends Co-Ordinator for the Mothers' Union in our Diocese. Judith gave a fascinating talk about the work of the MU both locally (supporting those in prison, those detained at Yarlswood, craft groups which knit for neonatal wards in hospital or who provide memory books for folk with dementia, providing holidays for those who can't afford them, and supplying necessities to women's refuges) and international (an example being the setting up and funding of finance and literacy schemes in Burundi). Synod said farewell to the Revd. Jenna Sage, moving to a parish post in the Diocese and Revd. Kirsty Borthwick, to a chaplaincy post in Oxford. Nicola was given a present and card as a mark of appreciation for work undertaken as Rural Dean. The final Synod of the year was in November at St. Leonard's, Heath and Reach. Kerry Smith was elected as lay co-chair for the coming year. There was no speaker, but an interesting discussion was had on the implications of and reactions to the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, with particular reference to safeguarding. The clerk announced her intention to stand down during the coming year due to a move out of the area. At every meeting the standing agenda included a General Synod report, a safeguarding update, eco-church information, the sharing of good news and a treasurer's report.

North Chilterns Group

We are members of the North Chilterns Group of Churches, a partnership of eight rural parishes in South Bedfordshire which work together to provide a mutual support network.

Revd Dr Stephen Burge, associate priest at Eaton Bray with Edlesborough and Dagnall, led an excellent Lent course on Angels in the Old and New Testaments. His extensive knowledge held everyone's attention throughout the five evenings and thanks are due to all who provided refreshments in Kensworth Church Hall. Our AGM followed an Ascension Day evening Eucharist in St Mary's Kensworth as usual. The June Confirmation Service was at Studham, with all three candidates coming from that parish, and was a very moving occasion. In September Penny Fray led a Quiet morning at St Mary Magdalene's Whipsnade on Trees. This was greatly appreciated by all who attended and allowed a valuable opportunity for private and thoughtful reflection. Many thanks indeed to Penny. It was the turn of Totternhoe to host the annual service in September. Due to works in the church, the service took place in the Church Hall, but this only enhanced the feeling of togetherness for those who were there. The Advent Carol Service was held at St Mary's Eaton

Bray – a joyous occasion and a perfect way in which to begin a new Church year. It was led by Revd Joy Cousans, ably musically supported by Dr. Stephen Axford, who has begun his reader training, meaning that we will have another reader in the NCG before too long! The chairmanship of the NCG continues to be rotating, with a volunteer from each benefice leading in turn.

There is no Methodist church in Whipsnade, but the Rector has developed good relationships with the Methodists in the Benefice parishes of Kensworth and Studham, and we have opportunities to join with our Methodist friends for worship and activities from time to time.

Eco-Church

Conscious that the Gospel is good news for God's earth, the Diocese of St Albans is encouraging churches locally to become environmentally aware and carbon-neutral in line with national Church aims. Whipsnade has earned a bronze A-Rocha award, as a first step towards improving our environmental credentials. Representatives from the three parishes have grouped together to take forward this initiative in all three Churches. They have lots of great ideas, which have continued during 2024, including involving children more, as this is an area which really captures the imagination of our young people.

Sarah Ayres now leads this work on behalf of the PCC and we are grateful for her contribution. During 2024 Sarah produced with support from Nicola an Eco-Action Plan for Whipsnade. This showed that we are making good progress in improving its environmental behaviours with no significant issues to address at present. The Plan will be reviewed and updated regularly and areas for future improvement identified and explored e.g. in relation to work with children. A very successful Earth Hour event was held at Kensworth in March 2024 – in 2025 Earth Hour will be hosted at Whipsnade.

Serving our Community - Ministry through pastoral and practical care

Some members of our parish are unable to attend church due to sickness, disability or age. Holy Communion at home is taken by the Rector and a team of volunteers to those in need, and parishioners are visited at home and in hospital. Some members of the congregation help frail or elderly people in Whipsnade by shopping, providing transport or by talking to them regularly to ensure that they are coping.

The Rector has been unfailing in her caring for people who have been ill, or died during 2024, and their loved ones, in the true spirit of Christian service. We sadly lost some faithful and loved members of our parish. Church members were saddened to hear about the death in March of Lorraine Wright who was a very active member of the Church for many years. She and her husband Paul worked regularly in the Churchyard and on maintaining the Church fabric. They organised several very successful Church social occasions in the Village Hall, most memorably a 1940s evening. Lorraine was the highly efficient PCC secretary for several years until she became ill. We were very grateful to her for her wide-ranging and enthusiastic contribution to our Church community. Margaret Clarke who died in April was a long-term, much-loved resident of the Home Park and member of our Church community. Her recent illness prevented her from being able to attend Church services, but she still maintained her membership of the Church and received communion at home.

Over many years the Rector has led special services and activities for those who have been bereaved and at which all are welcome. As well as the biennial 'In Loving Memory' service, which was at Studham in April, there is also an annual service for those who have been bereaved or who find Christmas difficult, called 'Light out of Darkness' and held this year on December 8 2024, which attracted a large number of worshippers.

A new-style Village Lunch began in April 2024 following Isobel Randall's long service as organiser. After an appeal in the Parish Link magazine, Tracy and Ed Stockdale came forward with other volunteers and agreed to take over the organizing role. For many people this monthly get-together is an opportunity to meet up with friends and make new ones. Everyone who attends enjoys a hot meal, bread roll, tea and cake. The Christmas Village Lunch attracted 55 people and a live entertainer was a festive addition to the normal lunch format. The Village Hall Committee kindly contributed to the costs. The Village community are hugely grateful to Tracy and Ed for taking on this role, ensuring that the Lunch continues to be financially sustainable, and raising substantial funds for the Church. The proceeds of the lunch in October were donated to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal, as was the Church's Harvest Service collection.

'Knit and Natter' our monthly social event for Whipsnade, has taken place monthly in the Church and continues to be popular. The knitted daffodil display at Easter and the knitted poppy display at Remembrance were much admired. The Group have been knitting Trauma Teddies for the police and social services and an article was written in the *Luton News* about their efforts. They have also knitted premature baby hats and blankets for the Luton and Dunstable Hospital. At Christmas they knitted a nativity scene and this was displayed in the Church throughout Advent and until Candlemas.

Daily open access to our peaceful and beautiful church is greatly appreciated. One of the ways we know this is from the extent that visitors use our Prayer Tree, kindly donated by Glenda Cox in memory of her parents Monica and Eric Todd. We also receive many positive comments in our Visitors Book about the Church and Churchyard. We know too how much parishioners and local walkers visiting the village appreciate being able to go into the Church for a moment of private reflection and prayer during their daily walks. Materials to assist prayer and meditation are always available in the Church.

In early 2022 the Church joined the Studham and Whipsnade Community Fibre Partnerships scheme which brought a fibre-broadband internet connection to the Church for the first time. This was installed in Spring 2023 and we are now able to communicate electronically. A donor funded the cost of this for the first year, but the church is now funding the connection going forward. We have with the support of the Diocese installed an electronic card reader for use at services; this is particularly useful for collections for charities and for donations by visitors, and is also used at regular services by some members of the congregation. We have also been able to use the internet for music accompaniment at concerts and at services when we have no organist available.

Ministry through Charitable Giving

Charitable giving covers many activities by the PCC and individual members of the congregation, including charitable donations and volunteering in the community. All members of our congregation make a contribution in their different ways to share their diverse gifts and talents for the benefit of others. Maintaining the fabric of the Church of St Mary Magdalene and the surrounding Churchyard are top priorities, and we are grateful to those volunteers who have continued to work to this end.

Guided by the Charities Committee, the PCC have established a tradition of giving to charity on behalf of the congregation. We divide our giving between local, national and international charities, with a focus on issues related to spiritual growth, health and poverty. In 2024, and despite continuing pressures on our finances, we shared a donation of £700 between 7 charities. We continued to donate to our usual charities such as the Bishop's annual Harvest Appeal, to the Royal British Legion on Remembrance Sunday, and to the Children's Society which at Christmas is the focus of our fundraising related to carol-singing (again in 2024 around the Home Park) and carol services. In 2024 the congregation also made donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Middle East appeal and the Hurricane Beryl appeal. Details of the Church's charitable giving are in the annual accounts. The Church donated some £3134 in total to charity in 2024. The PCC are proud to represent a congregation which makes it a priority to support those in need.

The *Parish Link*, our Benefice magazine, is distributed monthly, free to every house in all three villages, providing vital means of communication for all those who live in the villages, be they churchgoers or not. The Link website, www.parishlink.org.uk makes the *Link* available to Church supporters and friends who do not live in the three parishes.

The Churchyard

The PCC are very conscious that our large and beautiful Churchyard plays an important part in the ministry of the Church in Whipsnade and how much it is enjoyed by local walkers as well as visitors from further afield. A small and dedicated churchyard working party continued to work hard to maintain the Churchyard. It has come to be regarded as an outstanding example of wildlife and plant conservation.

Our achievements in wildlife and plant conservation are in large part due to the work done in 1993 by Charles Baker to produce a Churchyard Management Plan. This had not been updated since 2009 and was updated in 2024 by Jane Wright. The revised plan is based on the original text and includes a drawing of the Churchyard to incorporate the second Garden of Remembrance and update the position of trees including

new and replacement trees. The revised Plan includes photographs and notes on recent work carried out and work planned for the future. The Plan will be reviewed again in 2029.

Our two Gardens of Remembrance are much valued features of the Churchyard both for their beauty and for the interment of ashes of loved family and friends. The Archdeacon of Bedford dedicated the second Garden in March 2022. In May 2024 we installed a Portland stone memorial stone in the new Garden which is identical to that in the first with the same inscription.

The PCC have paid the bulk of the cost of regular grass-cutting and hedge-trimming, with regular support from the Parish Council. We are grateful for their generous contribution to our Churchyard maintenance costs. We are also grateful to Andy Ward who keeps the grass and hedges in tip-top order.

We are grateful to Jane and Ben Wright and the team who keep the Churchyard and new Garden of Remembrance in such excellent condition. Pam Ward, Paul Wright and Teresa Williams are loyal members of this team. The first Garden of Remembrance is lovingly maintained by the Kingham and Bedford family in honour of their deceased relatives; this is greatly appreciated by mourners.

FABRIC REPORT

Property Register

The Property Register, Terrier and Inventory have been updated and put into an on-line format, which has been sent to the Diocese. The majority of the work was done over many years by former churchwarden Isobel Randall, and formatted by Vanessa Hornby in 2011, and in 2024 it was updated again to include the new Garden of Remembrance and work done in the Churchyard. Isobel took 360 photographs, a very comprehensive record of the inventory and these have been saved onto data sticks. This has made the work of the current churchwardens very much easier.

A hard copy of the Property register is kept in the Vestry and a data stick is kept in the safe.

The Log Book

The Log Book, which relates to maintenance work done during the year has been updated and is kept in the Vestry.

The electrical inspection was carried out in May 2024 with no recommendations. The only observation was the need for a new light outside the vestry door. This was fitted outside the Vestry door in June 2024. PAT testing was carried out in February 2024 and again in October 2024, by Steve Hartley, Churchwarden at Kensworth Church. Fire extinguisher checks were carried out in April 2024. A new oil lamp casing was fitted in November 2024 to replace a broken one in the Nave.

In accordance with the recommendation on the Quinquennial report,

Implementing the 2021 Quinquennial inspection Report

A copy of the Report and recommendations is available for inspection in the Church. The recommendations include items requiring attention within 6 months; within 18 months; and within 5 years. The Purchasing, Works and Contracts Committee are leading on carrying forward the work and overseeing the practical arrangements involved. The report made a total of 25 recommendations.

During 2024 the North door was sanded down and lime wash was applied. Advice was given that because of the damp problem at the bottom of the door more work may be needed in 2025. It was recommended that oil be added to the lime wash, which may help the damp problem.

At the end of 2024, 23 of the Report's recommendations had been completed, including those that require ongoing monitoring, and 2 were in hand for completion early in 2025, well before the October 2026 five-year deadline. These are to re-point internally an area of the Bell Tower and to redecorate the Nave. Also planned for 2025 are modifications to the North Door to make it more accessible for wheelchair users, which reflects a suggestion in the Quinquennial Report that wheelchair access could be improved.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Total receipts during 2024 were £35,456.67 as detailed in the attached financial statements

Total expenditure over all accounts was £37,499.40. The Parish Share increased in 2024 to £22,892 (+3.76 %) which continues to be a significant expenditure for such a small church.

St Mary Magdalene has no charitable endowments.

We wish to record our thanks to Barrie Huggins for kindly examining the PCC accounts again this year.

General Fund

The General Fund account balance stood at £39,699 at the end of December 2024 compared with £41,058 in 2023.

Total income during the year was £31,804 compared to £34,098 in 2023. This reflected lower income from Gift Aid and the village lunch. Total expenditure was £33,275 compared with £32,837 in 2023, an increase of just £438.

We were pleased to send £700 of donations shared between 7 charities and £2,434 collected in church was sent to other charities.

Overall, the account showed an in-year surplus of £1,471.

Designated Fund

The Designated Fund covers specific projects including restoration. Income for the year was £1,218. Expenditure was £1,790. The end of year balance was £19,021 with £18,283 being designated for restoration

General issues

Interest on all accounts totalled £2,140 compared to £948 in 2023.

Reserves Policy and Risk Management

The PCC aim to retain sufficient funds in the PCC account to enable the smooth day-to-day running of the Church, that is, payment of the Parish Share to the Diocese, and meeting our administrative expenses. Funds for the maintenance of the fabric are kept in the Designated Funds to provide for emergencies. The Church, including the new extension, is insured following the advice of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, to cover any potential damage to the building and the Churchyard, and to meet the cost of any potential claims against the PCC. As part of the terms of this policy, we follow advice in taking precautions against theft, fire or damage to the building, goods and chattels.

Legacies policy

The PCC welcome all gifts in Wills, however large or small. Our policy is to use gifts for the benefit of the Church and its community and to ensure that there continues to be an active and thriving church in Whipsnade, both now and for future generations.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

At present the PCC form a Charity within the Church of England which is regulated by the Charities Commission but excepted from registration, as gross annual income is below the threshold of £100,000. The Charity is, however, regarded by HMRC as having charitable status for tax purposes.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Mary Magdalene's the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our Rector), Churchwardens, members elected to serve on the Deanery Synod and a maximum of 9 members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the Electoral Roll of the Church. All those who attend our services regularly are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and to stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the

Parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

We take our responsibilities in relation to safeguarding very seriously. Safeguarding is considered at every meeting of the PCC. During the past year there have been no reports of safeguarding issues. DBS clearance is required for those involved with vulnerable children and adults. All members of the PCC have obtained DBS clearance. The Rector, members of the PCC, the appointed Parish Safeguarding Officer (Mike Bailey) and several other members on the Electoral Roll have completed or refreshed their safeguarding training courses. Safeguarding policy and practice meet the requirements of the Church of England and the Diocese of St Albans. The policies and practices with regard to safeguarding are clearly displayed in the Church. Each year PCC members review these policies in accordance with Diocesan guidelines, as well as those on data protection, disability access, equal opportunities and health and safety.

The Annual Parish Church Meetings (APMs) were held in April 2024.

The Church Electoral Roll was reviewed in 2024 and presented to the APM. The legal requirements in relation to the holding and publishing of personal data are strictly observed. Each member is given an assurance that we only use the information to enable us to collate church membership statistics and report them to the Diocese, and also so that we can communicate with members. We do not keep any unnecessary personal data on individuals. At the 2024 APCM there were 51 people on the Roll. Ten members of the Roll reside in the Parish, with 41 members living outside the Parish boundary. A completely new Roll must be prepared in 2025.

Sub-committees were re-constituted and members appointed in June 2023 following the APCM: the Standing Committee (Rector, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary, Lay Vice-chair); Charities Committee (Rector, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary plus one other available member); Purchasing, Works and Contracts Committee (Lay Vice-chair, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary); Children Committee (Rector, Churchwardens, Sarah Ayres, Sylvia Kendrick, Mike Bailey and Glenda Cox, Secretary); Churchyard Committee (Churchwardens, Pam Ward, Paul Wright, Secretary); Social Committee (Jo King, Sarah Ayres/Sylvia Kendrick (Music), Isobel Randall/Jane Wright (Catering)).

The PCC met five times during 2024. Members considered matters relevant to the development of ministry, the health and safety of people attending the Church, and the maintenance of the Church fabric and Churchyard. Matters of a pastoral nature and issues concerning safeguarding were reported at each meeting. Minutes are displayed in the Church so that all details of discussions are available to all. Each meeting received reports from the Churchwardens, the Treasurer and the Safeguarding Officer as well as from representatives of the Deanery Synod, the North Chilterns Group and the Eco-Working Group.

Some thankyou's

A huge thank you from the PCC to all those who have worked during 2024 to fulfil our purpose and continue to provide public benefit through much needed worship and pastoral support, while keeping the Church open and both it and the Churchyard safe and in good order. A church would not function without the commitment and service people of faith who work tirelessly and selflessly for the wider good. There are so many people who merit thanks this year.

Thanks are due in particular to our hard-working Churchwardens for all that they do, and the responsibility they carry throughout the year.

We are grateful also for the work of Les Randall, our Treasurer, particularly in the challenging times of the past few years, and of Joan Bailey, the PCC Secretary. And our grateful thanks go to Mike Bailey for his chairmanship of the Purchasing, Works and Contracts Committee, and all the work involved for him as Parish Safeguarding Officer in these times of evolving Church safeguarding requirements.

The quality of our worship has been enhanced by the music provided by Chris Hazell. We are very grateful for Chris's substantial contribution to the work of the Church. We are also grateful to Matthew Huggins for playing at our Christmas services in Chris's absence.

Our dedicated band of bell-ringers, led by Pam Ward, summon people to worship in the traditional way. We are very grateful to the Kendrick/Ayres family for their service over so many years.

The Church is made beautiful by the efforts of flower-arrangers. Ann Brinklow and Teresa Williams have ensured that the Church looks beautiful throughout the year, giving great pleasure to the congregation and to all those who use the Church.

Sidesmen, readers and those who administer the Chalice support our worship by their regular assistance in services. Volunteers have also opened up the Church each day for the benefit of the community and those who visit the Church, and to turn on the new card reader during the summer and over Christmas.

Thanks to the Ayres, Whalleys and Glenda Cox for supporting our very successful Sunday School.

We have a wonderful team of Church cleaners who make the Church safe every day for those who use it for private prayer, rest and contemplation. The whole community are grateful for their hard work.

This year we have been blessed by the efforts of those who have organised or supported fundraising events to bolster Church funds. The Hornby family, particularly Helen and David, held a third delightful concert in the Church in celebration of the life and contribution of Vanessa, in aid of Bowel Cancer UK and the Food Bank; this is now a much-valued annual celebration. We held a brilliant Autumn concert organised by Jane Wright and Jo King; especial thanks are due to Robert Kendrick, Emma and Annabelle for their lovely singing performances, which were much appreciated by all, and to all those who contributed to the magnificent buffet provided.

We supported the Bedfordshire Churches 'Bike and Hike event in September; there was the usual Macmillan Coffee morning held in the Church in September, for which Isobel baked scrumptious cakes; and the Poppy Appeal was once again strongly supported across our Benefice.

Sincere thanks to Fiona McDougal and her Parish Link team, to Les Randall the website editor and to Jane Wright our Whipsnade correspondent.

Heartfelt appreciation to our Rector for her inspirational leadership. Her caring and conscientious pastoral and ministering support sets a fine example to us all in our Christian living.

Signed on behalf of the PCC by the Reverend Canon Nicola Lenthall (PCC Chairman)

..... Date:

ST. MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH, WHIPSNAD
Income and Expenditure Account 1st January 2024 - 31st December 2024

	<u>2024</u>				<u>2023</u>			
	General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	2024 Total Funds	General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	2023 Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME								
Church Fees	2,106.40			2,106.40	1,970.70			1,970.70
GASDS	3,924.34			3,924.34	3,491.23			3,491.23
Planned Giving - Tax Efficient	15,221.00			15,221.00	16,077.00			16,077.00
Tax recovered on Gift Aid/GASDS	4,663.49			4,663.49	4,893.36			4,893.36
Donations	1,601.56			1,601.56	1,236.23			1,236.23
Bank interest	1,514.51	626.43		2,140.94	886.08	61.68		947.76
Village Lunch	1,171.00			1,171.00	3,639.30			3,639.30
Events	1,601.50			1,601.50	1,904.00			1,904.00
Charity Events			2,434.38	2,434.38			2,225.59	2,225.59
Garden of Remembrance		231.81		231.81				
Church Restoration & Development		348.25		348.25		96.24		96.24
Bell Fund		12.00		12.00		725.35		725.35
	31,803.80	1,218.49	2,434.38	35,456.67	34,097.90	883.27	2,225.59	37,206.76
EXPENDITURE								
Parish Share	22,892.00			22,892.00	22,063.00			22,063.00
Church Expenses	6,265.71			6,265.71	5,911.35			5,911.35
Utilities	2,307.94			2,307.94	2,939.49			2,939.49
Clergy and Admin support	475.88			475.88	656.23			656.23
Clergy Expenses	470.55			470.55	409.85			409.85
Charities	725.00		2,434.38	3,159.38	725.00		2,225.59	2,950.59
Bank charges	137.94			137.94	132.27			132.27
Garden of Remembrance		1,200.00		1,200.00				
Church Restoration & Development		590.00		590.00		916.80		916.80
Bell Fund								
	33,275.02	1,790.00	2,434.38	37,499.40	32,837.19	916.80	2,225.59	35,979.58
Balance of Income less Expenditure	-1,471.22	-571.51		-2,042.73	1,260.71	-33.53		1,227.18
Add Opening Balance	41,169.99	19,592.29		60,762.28	39,796.97	19,625.82		59,422.79
Balance called forward 31 December	39,698.77	19,020.78		58,719.55	41,057.68	19,592.29		60,649.97

Bank Balances

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
CCLA PCC CB3033610-001	30,048.12	28,533.61
CCLA Restoration CB3033611-001	12,428.43	11,802.00
HSBC BANK 281	16,346.48	20,426.67
Add cheques not cashed previous year	671.99	559.68
Deduct cheques not cashed this year	-775.47	-671.99
	<u>58,719.55</u>	<u>60,649.97</u>

Breakdown of Funds

	Opening	Receipts	Payments	Balance
Designated Funds				
Garden of Remembrance	968.19	231.81	1,200.00	
Church Restoration & Dev.	17,898.75	974.68	590.00	18,283.43
Bell Fund	725.35	12.00		737.35
Total of designated funds	19,592.29	1,218.49	1,790.00	19,020.78

Restricted Funds

Bishop's Harvest Appeal	385.00
British Legion Poppy Appeal	181.80
DEC Middle East Appeal	70.00
Dunstable Foodbank	237.10
Hurricane Beryl Appeal	185.00
Macmillan Coffee Morning	600.01
The Children's Society	775.47
Total of Restricted Funds	2,434.38

Donations by the PCC

Dementia UK	100.00
Faith and Belief	100.00
Rennie Grove Hosp	100.00
Smile Train UK	100.00
Society of Mary & Martha	100.00
St Martin in the Fields	100.00
The Salvation Army	100.00
Total of Donations by the PCC	700.00

Total Expenditure

Altar wine, breads, linen and candles etc	191.65
Bank charges	137.94
Broadband	461.16
Charity giving	700.00
Charity giving (restricted)	2,434.38
Church expenses paid by the Rector	1,351.19
Church Flowers	200.00
Churchyard grass & hedge cutting	1,040.00
Church Roadway	47.00
Churchyard tap	44.99
Clergy and admin support	475.88
Clergy expenses	470.55
Electrical work	858.00
Electricity	2,209.57
Fire extinguisher	138.00
Garden of Remembrance	1,200.00
Globe and chimney	41.90
Insurance	691.22
North Chilterns Group of Churches Levy	102.00
Parish Share	22,892.00
PAT Testing	132.00
Plaques for Garden of Remembrance	306.60
Poppy Wreath	25.00
Roof Repairs	540.00
Subscriptions	50.00
Tree cutting in Churchyard	660.00
Water Bills	98.37
Total	37,499.40

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Whipsnade Church

This report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31st December 2024.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner.

The PCC are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The PCC consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions of the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the school and a comparison of the accounts presented with these records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking consideration from you as governors concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required for an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on these accounts.

Independent examiner's statement.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Date:

16/3/25

E.B. Huggins
93 West Hill
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 3PN